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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DILI 000439

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MTS, IO  
USUN FOR RICHARD MCCURRY  
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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT GUSMAO CONCERNED ABOUT CAPE VERDE SRSG CANDIDATE

REF: DILI 429

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CLASSIFIED BY: Grover Joseph Rees, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy  
Dili, Department of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

(1) (S/NF) Summary: President Xanana Gusmao told Ambassador Rees today that he is deeply concerned about reports that former Cape Verde President Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro might be appointed to head the new United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). Gusmao said it would take Monteiro or almost any other new Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) at least a year to understand the political situation in East Timor, and that this could seriously hinder efforts to ensure a level playing field for the 2007 elections and to improve the national police, the armed forces, and the justice system. He expressed a strong preference for the reappointment of current SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa, who he said understands these problems and knows that new approaches will be needed to solve them. Gusmao's chief of staff told Ambassador that the President is particularly concerned that Monteiro would see East Timor through the prism of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Nations (CPLP), many of whose leaders have close relationships with former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri and his "Mozambique clique." End Summary.

(2) (S/NF) Ambassador met with President Gusmao today to discuss a wide range of topics. A full report on the President's observations on the current situation in East Timor will follow in Septel. Much of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of UNMIT, and particularly on Gusmao's concern about reports that Mascarenhas Monteiro is about to be appointed to head the mission.

(3) (S/NF) Gusmao said he has met Mascarenhas Monteiro but does not know him well enough to make a detailed assessment of his character or capabilities. He predicted, however, that it would take Mascarenhas Monteiro or almost any other new SRSG at least a year to understand the political and social situation in East

Timor. This would result in an unfocused UN mission that would offer no serious resistance to efforts by the Fretilin party leadership, dominated by Alkatiri and the Mozambique group, to rig the national elections that must be held in early 2007. Gusmao told Ambassador that he had sent a letter to Secretary General Kofi Annan (see Reftel) urging that Hasegawa be reappointed to head the new mission and that he remain at least until after the elections. He said he believes Hasegawa has become acutely aware of past mistakes made by the international community including the UN, as well as by the Timorese themselves, and that he would insist that the elections be organized and conducted in such a way as to produce a free and fair outcome. Gusmao said he believes Hasegawa also understands UN efforts to retrain the police, the armed forces, and the justice system must be directed in large part to ensuring that these institutions not be manipulated to perpetuate the power of any party or faction. In the President's opinion, Hasegawa would be more likely than a new SRSG to insist that UN advisors promote "best practices" rather than assisting Timorese officials in using the machinery of the state to pursue narrow political objectives.

(4) (S/NF) In the course of discussing his opposition to Mascarenhas Monteiro and support for Hasegawa, President Gusmao touched briefly on what he regards as the continuing support by the external Lusophone community, and particularly by the government of Portugal or at least important elements within it, for former Prime Minister Alkatiri and his political faction. (Please strictly protect.) The President's chief of staff, Agio Pereira, elaborated on this aspect of Gusmao's concerns in a separate conversation with Ambassador that immediately followed the meeting with the President. He said the President believed Mascarenhas Monteiro would almost certainly see East Timor from the perspective of the external Lusophone community and particularly of the CPLP. According to Pereira, during the recent crisis elements in the CPLP and particularly the Government of Portugal put pressure on Gusmao not to seek Alkatiri's resignation. He added that many Portuguese-speaking

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UN advisors in East Timor had participated in a concerted effort to support Alkatiri and to portray the President's actions as unconstitutional and imprudent. Pereira says the President fears that a mission headed by Mascarenhas Monteiro would be dominated by these elements, and that this would be counterproductive to the tasks of promoting genuinely participatory democracy and professional justice and police systems. (Please strictly protect.)

(4) (S/NF) Pereira said he believes the continuing affection for Alkatiri and his faction within the external Lusophone community --- which is in sharp contrast to their extreme unpopularity in East Timor --- is due in part to Alkatiri's single-minded and inflexible efforts to impose the Portuguese language on an unwilling population and in part to effective lobbying by Minister of State Administration Ana Pessoa and other Alkatiri associates in Lisbon and other Lusophone capitals.

(5) (S/NF) Comment: President Gusmao's belief that Hasegawa would vigorously support fair elections and correct approaches to policing and the justice system is consistent with the assessment of most like-minded observers, including Embassy Dili. It is nevertheless remarkable that the President and his chief of staff Pereira --- both of whom have longstanding ties to Portugal and who regard the Portuguese language and culture as an important part of Timor's heritage --- should express concern about the appointment of a leading Lusophone political figure to head the UN mission. Unfortunately, they are right in believing that a big part of the next SRSG's job will be to dismantle the network of UN-provided advisors who, under the rubric of "Timorese ownership", assisted the Alkatiri government's efforts to misuse the police, the military, the justice system, and the electoral machinery. End comment.

WHITMAN  
REES